DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 369 584 RC 019 527

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TITLE Multiculturalism: Implications for Outdoor and Conservation Educators.
PUB DATE 15 Jul 93
NOTE 39p.; Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Association for Conservation Information (55th, Portsmouth, NH, July 15, 1993).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Accessibility (for Disabled); Change Strategies; *Conservation Education; *Cultural Pluralism; Disabilities; Ethnic Groups; Multicultural Education; *Organizational Change; Organizations (Groups); Outdoor Activities; *Outdoor Education; Population Trends; *Role of Education
IDENTIFIERS *Fishing; *Hunting

ABSTRACT

This paper addresses the role of multiculturalism in outdoor and conservation education. Multiculturalism promotes appreciation of diversity including differences originating from race, ethnicity, gender, and abilities, thereby developing tolerance and human understanding. Several trends make multiculturalism relevant to outdoor activities. By the year 2025, the percentage of the U.S. population composed of nonwhite groups will increase from 20 percent to 35 percent. Currently, the majority of anglers and hunters are white males. Wildlife agencies, sportsmen's organizations, and conservation groups need to reach out to populations traditionally not targeted through their programs. Multiculturalism offers a unique opportunity to promote hunting, fishing, and trapping. Strategies include seeking out multicultural audiences when discussing or promoting outdoor activities, eliminating physical and attitudinal barriers, advancing accessibility of the outdoors to all groups, avoiding pitfalls such as biased thinking and tokenism, and using person-first terminology when describing multicultural groups. Outdoor educators can incorporate a multicultural approach and promote the exploration of traditions as a means of finding a common ground among cultures. Contains figures illustrating population trends and percentages of participants in fishing by race and ethnicity. (LP)

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ED 369 584

Multiculturalism: Implications for Outdoor and Conservation Educators

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55th Annual Conference
Association for Conservation Information
July 15, 1993
Portsmouth, NH

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Multiculturalism: Implications for Outdoor and Conservation Educators

Good Morning. It is great to have an excuse to be back in New Hampshire again. Both of my sons were born here, in Bow Lake Village, while I was doing a stint with Cooperative Extension at the University of New Hampshire. I have many happy Granite State memories. I also have some great stories.

I recall a fellow who lived over in North Guilford who'd gotten quite a reputation for his ability to train coonhounds. His name was Louie Gennault, and he had this bluetick bitch named Annie that Louie claimed could outdo any other dog in the state. I heard so much about Louie and his dog I figured I had to see Annie work for myself. So I called Louie up and arranged to come see him and his dog, get some photos and do a story on them.

I went up to North Guilford one evening and met up with Louie and Annie. Now Annie was one homely hound, I can tell you! But Louie assured me her looks weren't what put raccoons up a tree. I was equally certain her looks weren't going to put her on the cover of a magazine. We hit the trail and sure enough, there goes Annie striking up in a beautiful bawl. And not three minutes later she's sounding treed.

I looked at Louie. "That's either a woodchuck or an almighty tired raccoon," I said. Louie just chuckled, in a manner that fairly oozed confidence. "Let's go see that raccoon," Louie said.

So we followed Annie's calls to the tree. I got my camera and flash ready. Louie sat down and waited. I started shining my light up into the tree, but I couldn't pick up any eyes.

"Can't see him!" I said. Louie said nothing. Annie barked treed.

Well I looked and looked, and I saw nothing. No sign of a raccoon, or anything else for that matter. Finally I looked at Louie and said, "Louie, there's no coon in that tree!"

Louie just turned and looked at Annie. "Dagnabbit!" he said to her, "you gone and done it again!"

"Done what?" I said. "What'd she do?"

Louie just shook his head and said, "Old Annie done it again. She's so damn smart she gets to the tree before the raccoon does."

After this morning I hope you can leave with some ideas about how you, too, can get to the next tree before the raccoon does, or at least at the same time. If only, like Louie's Annie, we could develop the ability to anticipate, and get there even a little bit ahead of all the commotion...

This morning I'll be talking about multiculturalism, and suggest some implications it may have for us, and some responses we might have as well as roles we might play. We'll talk about what multiculturalism is, and why outdoor, environmental and conservation educators--and natural resources agencies--should care about it. We'll talk about how you can get there before the raccoon does, using the interest in multiculturalism as an opportunity to make real differences for people, natural resources, outdoor recreation traditions, and the future.

So what is multiculturalism, and why should we care? It is apparent that society desperately needs to find ways to better understand, accept and appreciate the diversity that exists among us. That case is amply built in the media on a daily basis. Globally, humankind seems to have a propensity for intolerance. Responses to diversity have included genocide, "ethnic cleansing," ghettoization, apartheid, relegation to reservations, and discrimination.

These problems are still among us. However, fewer and fewer people are inclined to accept these "solutions." Multiculturalism offers a new way to think about diversity, a direction for the future that promotes tolerance and human understanding.

James Banks, Director of the Center for Multicultural Education at the University of Washington, Seattle, suggests that multiculturalism offers a new way of looking at E Pluribus Unum, out of many, one. He says "you cannot take the many and make them one by imposing the one on many.... So many... don't feel a part of this country....Yet all our lives are tied together. We talk about kids who are at risk, but I think we are all at risk if we don't create a society that is united within a framework of shared values, like democracy and equality." (Banks 1992, p.21-3)

Others suggest that multiculturalism "seeks to create an environment in which (people) can understand, respect and ultimately value cultural diversity." (Oliver and Howley 1992, p.1) I would submit that the appreciation of diversity includes the appreciation of racial, ethnic and gender differences, as well as persons with disabilities. Multiculturalism assists us to value <u>all</u> people, not just those most like us, or most like the western, Anglo,

male perspective which has been dominant in much of our society. Multiculturalism promotes a new order, as Banks says, that is united within a framework of shared values, not dominated by cronyism and the good old boy network.

And not coincidentally, I believe strongly that multiculturalism needs to include an understanding and valuing of both the rural and indigenous cultures and traditions that developed and support hunting, trapping and fishing. More on this later.

Why Should We Care

Well, OK, really now, why should we care about multiculturalism? What's the point? Why are we listening to all this?

Well folks, our world is changing. We tend to want to resist change, and support the status quo, but that won't stop the change from happening. We can choose to participate in shaping the direction of the change, or we can ignore it and further isolate ourselves. Let me illustrate what I mean.

There are four major demographic changes facing the US population in the next 30 years. (Ditton 1992) Our population is aging. The median age in 1980 was 30. By 2025, it will be 41. In 1980, 11% of our population was over 65. By 2025, it will be 20%, representing an increase of 34 million more elders than we have today. (Murdock et al 1990)

Households will look different. The percentage of married couples will decrease. The percentage of non-traditional households will dramatically increase, and, there will continue to be a rise in the percentage of female heads of households. (Ditton 1992)

Of more relevance to our discussion of multiculturalism is the rate of growth in the population and the increase in non-anglo population numbers.

Even though the actual rate of growth has slowed, by 2025 the number of people in the US will still grow by almost 50 million persons. (Murdock et al 1990) This in itself is a major concern. What will be the impact of this growth on our natural resources? It is not a valid comparison, but things have changed drastically on the resources scene since 1950, when we had 50 million fewer persons than we do today.

And just where will the growth be occurring?

By 2025, 81% of the new growth will be in non-white populations. The anglo, or white population is expected stabilize. (Murdock et al 1990)

By 2025, the percentage of the US population composed of non-white groups will increase from 20% to 35%. Today, 40% of these non-white groups reside in three states--California, Florida and Texas. By the year 2025, anglos in Texas and California will be in the minority, as non-whites exceed 50% of the population. (Murdock et al 1990)

Now, if you've been able to follow all that, you're probably anticipating what this means for natural resource users, license buyers, hunters, fishermen, trappers....the traditional constituency of fish and wildlife agencies. Do these folks look like what I've just described? Not. 89% of today's anglers and 93% of today's hunters are white. Most are male.

Let's look at recreational fishing. The industry is concerned about a decline in sales, participation and avidity. Agencies are concerned about flat or declining license sales. In spite of an overall population growth of 19%, by 2025 recreational fishing is expected to grow by only .5%. (Murdock et al 1990) And where will this growth come?

Fifty-seven per cent of the net increase in anglers will come from non-white groups. African-Americans will make up 29% of this increase, and 40 to 50% will be from latino and Asian communities. (Murdock et al 1990)

It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out what this means. If we don't reach out to non-white communities we will continue to see our constituent base shrink and we will continue to be pushed further and further from the mainstream. Yet how many wildlife agencies, sportsmen's organizations and conservation groups are even thinking about this issue, let alone doing anything about it? And those that are doing something--how effective are they?

Many wildlife agencies believe that their greatest threat is the animal rights movement. In my opinion, the animal rights issue itself is miniscule when compared to the fact that most hunters, trappers and anglers look a lot like white males, and the rest of the world does not and looks less so everyday. Where are the women? The latinos, Asians, African-Americans? The persons with disabilities? The kids? The seniors? The danger from animal rights groups is not so much that they're winning the hearts and minds of the masses, which, by and large, they're not. The danger lies in the

polarization, isolation and fundamentalism to which our reaction to animal rights has driven us, a reaction that itself is intolerant of any alternative way of thinking. When we are so paranoid that we cannot accept diversity among ourselves, how can we include others who really are different?

Are you feeling like you're looking up a tree at a fat raccoon who's been there more than a little while? Would you like to strategize some on how you can beat him to the next tree?

Or you could wind up like my friend Ole Oleson. Ole's one of these guys that the harder he tries to do it right, the more things happen to him. Like last year when we were out deer hunting on a cold, rainy day in upstate New York. It was mid-morning, and we got back together after a fruitless few hours sitting in the rain on stands. I watched him wander up, looking dejected and sodden, but with this really strange, puzzled look on his face.

"Can't understand it," Ole was saying. I asked him what, and he proceeded to relate the details leading to his puzzlement.

It seems that not long before, Ole found himself in need of relief. So he found an appropriate location, dug his cathole, slipped his coveralls down around his knees and proceeded to make his contribution. A rather substantial one, from Ole's description, that gave him considerable relief. Upon finishing, Ole pulled up his coveralls and turned to regard his handiwork. Now, Ole says he was just looking to make sure his aim had been true, and to cover up the hole, but he's not the kind of guy to waste a chance to admire the results of his own efforts, so I know what he was looking at.

But it was gone. I mean, Ole couldn't find it. He said he looked all around, scuffed up the leaves and everything, but it was just plain gone. And Ole was some puzzled by it.

"Now I know I did it," he told me. "There was no hill for it to roll down (I think he'd already made that mistake some time before) and it couldn't have been that well camouflaged. Where do you suppose it got off to?"

He gave a little shiver as a drop of water ran down his neck. "Gettin' colder," he said, and reached behind him to pull up his hood.

Just as he did this I had this prescient feeling, sort of like when you know something is about to happen. Almost immediately I realized exactly what was about to happen, only it was too late to do anything. It was like watching in slow motion. Ole pulled up his hood, I said "Ole...." and he turned to look at me, something really awful dawning in his eyes. And there, tucked up under his hood, now on top of his head, sat the source of his puzzlement in all its glory.

Well, Ole had a problem. And I hope by now it is obvious that we've got a problem of a somewhat different sort. I hope you'll agree that we can, and in fact ought to be part of the solution. If we do nothing we will continue to watch our traditional support base erode, and ultimately find that we've become an anachronism. If we view multiculturalism as an opportunity, we can participate in the process and shape the changes. The risk is, of course, that we'll likely have to change some of the ways we're used to thinking. Maybe it is about time. Maybe we have a chance to get there before the raccoon does, or at the very least wind up with the poop somewhere besides on top of our heads.

But here it is. Multiculturalism offers a unique and unparalleled opportunity to promote hunting, fishing and trapping; and in so doing help connect a whole bunch of hitherto uninitiated folks with the natural world. (Matthews 1991, 1993)

How can this be accomplished? How can we take advantage of the opportunities and meet the challenges offered by multiculturalism? **Invite. Include. Break barriers. Deny disability. Advance accessibilty. Avoid pitfalls. Listen. Learn from your mistakes.**

Now in no way do I wish to be seen as standing up here with all the answers. I don't even know all the questions yet, and there have been a number of times when I've smelled something suspicious and probably should have checked on top my head a lot sooner than I did. But I can offer some suggestions based on my experience, and that of others.

Invite and Include

By thinking and acting in an invitational manner we can include multicultural audiences. Too often, when we think about our constituents and audiences we see white males. And although this is understandable, if we hope, for example, to involve more African-Americans in hunting we must include them in our thinking when we think about hunters. If, when we envision our typical outdoor user all we see are white folks, how can we help others see themselves using the outdoors?

Now, I don't want to be seen as slamming the IWLA and their important efforts to encourage ethical hunting. No way. But look at this example of their latest brochure. Yes, it targets very

specifically the typical hunter, camo NAHC or NRA cap and all. But do you see any women? kids? Elders? Black folks, Asians or latinos? Perhaps its not fair to use this example, but isn't this typical of the way we tend to do things? And folks, this does **not** include or invite participation from people who do not look like this. They will not see themselves as part of this picture if we don't put them there first in our thinking.

Part of thinking invitationally and inclusionally is not accepting surface appearances and stereotypes. We can learn from the mistakes of the environmental movement on this one.

For years, mainstream environmental groups have sung the blues about the lack of non-anglo involvement with what these groups perceived to be the most pressing environmental issues of the day. It was real convenient to look no further than to say, "Well, black folks just aren't interested in the environment." And many people accepted this as gospel. But it just isn't true, as the recent National Minority Environmental Summit demonstrated. What is true is that people in communities of color tended to be less concerned about preserving free-flowing rivers a thousand miles away, and more concerned about the 80% of all toxic waste dump sites being located within their communities. Their environmental focus tended to be on locally-drive, grassroots efforts that linked concern for the environment with social justice and community issues, often through pre-existing organizations. (Bullard and Wright 1992)

This offers an important illustration of why we need to be alert to what I call "paradigm paralysis", the tendency we all have to limit our thinking to the perspective closest to our own. Truly

invitational and inclusional thinking is open to the possibility of alternative views.

Break barriers. Deny disability. Advance accessibilty.

Barriers are impediments. They get in the way, and challenge us as we try to accomplish what we set out to do. We want to help people access the outdoors. To enable this to happen, we need to eliminate the barriers.... the physical ones as well as the attitudinal ones. These include the barriers that prevent others from accessing the experience, and the barriers that prevent us from enabling others to access the experience.

We frequently think about barriers and access in the context of working with persons with disabilities. I believe, however, we should expand this concept. I am fully aware of the risk involved with this, and in no way do I want to be seen as viewing non-anglos as being in some way handicapped. But the approach used in therapeutic recreation has some very applicable parallels for us.

Simply, the approach is to identify and eliminate barriers, both physical and attitudinal. You work with individuals and focus on their abilities, not their disabilities. You help understand their perspective, so you can work together to eliminate barriers. And you eliminate physical barriers through modifying, adapting and developing skills that enable and empower, not limit and deny.

Frequently the thing that most needs changing is not the individual with the disability, but the attitudes of those around them. These attitudes conspire to limit. Our task, then, is not only to help individuals overcome their limitations but to let these

individuals help us overcome our own limitations of perception. We call this developing an accessible heart.

Accessibility involves more than providing for physical access in compliance with the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act. A significant amount of money is being spent on facilities, wheelchair paths and so on, and rightly so. .But few are going beyond the obvious. We need to examine whether we are really advancing accessibility on all fronts. Are we providing program assistance to enable people to access the resource? Why should an individual in a wheelchair use a wheelchair-accessible fishing pier if he or she is clueless about fishing? We provide the facility, but not the program.

On a different tack, remember the urban fishing thrust in the late 70's and early 80's? Some of the problems associated with it had to do with accessibility. **It does little good to teach an urban kid how to fish if he or she cannot access the equipment, the aquatic or marine resource, the fishing expertise or the social support needed to keep fishing. It does little good to get kids involved with hunter safety education programs when they have no one to take them hunting, and little social support for the activity.** We need to find ways, like New York's Sportfishing and Aquatic Resources Education Program, and the Apprentice Hunter Program, to connect caring adults with eager kids. This is advancing accessibility.

We need also to recognize and appreciate that people are different. Expectations differ among various racial and ethnic groups when they recreate outdoors. Research evidence supports that latinos and African-Americans place a much higher value on

socializing with family and friends than anglos while recreating, and are more likely to travel to outdoor recreation sites in groups. (Blahna 1992) Are we finding ways to include these groups, to make the outdoors accessible to them? Blahna concludes "Resource managers have justified low use levels by minorities as being the result of a lack of interest on the part of minorities for the types of opportunities provided by the agencies. ....An equally valid argument can be made that the agencies do not provide the types of experiences preferred by ethnic minorities...." (Blahna 1992) We need to identify these preferences. We need to ask ethnic communities, and communities of color, so we can work together to enable access to activities like fishing.

Avoid pitfalls

Even the best intentioned among us fall victim to stereotyping on occasion. We need to watch our thinking, and our talking at all times. None of us are free of biases. Biases need to be recognized as such, and dealt with appropriately.

Another pitfall to avoid is tokenism. Tokenism occurs when, frequently at the last minute, someone looks around and says "Hey! We need a black person on this committee!" There is no real interest in involving and empowering the community, or understanding an African-American cultural perspective. Otherwise there would have been involvement from the start, by more than one person. Tokenism is a PR thing, all smoke and mirrors. We're talking about real access here. What needs to happen is the development of trust, on all sides, and a willingness to listen to what is really being said.

Developing trust is critical. All too frequently these communities have been used by some program or institution to advance some agenda that had little to do with the community's real needs. (HOFNOD) It is no wonder that many times new programs, especially those brought in from the outside, are greeted with suspicion and distrust, if they are greeted at all. Developing trust takes hard work, lots of time and a sustained commitment. Count on it. Invest.

Listen. Learn from your mistakes.

I can painfully recall the time I was brought up short by one of our volunteer Instructors, an articulate African-American social worker from downtown Syracuse. She took offense to a report I had written in which I addressed how our program would be targeting urban African-American audiences, and provide alternatives to drug abuse, in the same paragraph. She resented the implicit, though purely unintentional assumption that most black kids used drugs. And I had to confront my bias.

I also had to wonder how many other times I had blundered and no one cared enough to inform me. So now I try to ask more often if I am unsure. And I try to listen a whole lot more. I also realize that when I ask, Iam not always going to get an answer, but if I can develop enough trust eventually I will get an open response.

Politically Correct Terms

We bash this concept of being politically correct in our terminology. I'll agree that sometimes it borders on the ridiculous, but it is worth the extra effort to show you care enough to use the descriptors preferred. Chief among these is the use of person-first

terms to describe not only persons with disabilities, but anyone. Person-first terminolgy affirms that we are all people, traveling together through time on the same earthship. Though we are different we share many things in common, things which ought to be explored and celebrated. We are all people first.

And this leads to the final point I'd like to make. In seeking things we share, we have the opportunity to promote fishing, hunting, trapping and other woodcraft activities as a means of finding a common ground among cultures. All of us, no matter what our backgrounds, share a common cultural experience in the hunting and gathering of food, and developing techniques for survival. Multiculturalism offers us an unparalleled opportunity to explore these traditions, not just from the perspective of American rural culture, but from the perspectives of indigenous and aboriginal peoples everywhere, from the African savanna to the Mongolian steppes. Each culture, each group of people around the world evolved in a direct relationship with nature and the natural world. Understanding and appreciating this is something we, in our profession, are uniquely suited to doing, and helping others to do.

The world cries out today for more human understanding, a better appreciation of diversity, and a sane and sustainable environmental course to the future. We have a tremendous opportunity to combine multiculturalism with outdoor and conservation education, and we, you and I, are uniquely positioned for doing so. Think what kinds of real differences we could make if

we can help people understand the implications of this statement by Oren Lyons, faithkeeper with the Onondagas:

"In our way of life, in our government, with every decision we make, we always keep in mind the seventh generation to come. It's our job to see that the people coming ahead, the generations still unborn, have a world no worse than ours- and hopefully better. When we walk upon Mother Earth we always plant our feet carefully because we know the faces of our future generations are looking up at us from beneath the ground..."

Thank you.

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"you cannot take the many and make them one by imposing the one on many.... So many... don't feel a part of this country....Yet all our lives are tied together. We talk about kids who are at risk, but I think we are all at risk if we don't create a society that is united within a framework of shared values, like democracy and equality."

James Banks, Director of the Center for Multicultural Education at the University of Washington, Seattle.

multiculturalism "seeks to create an environment in which (people) can understand, respect and ultimately value cultural diversity." **(Oliver and Howley 1992, p.1)**

.....includes the appreciation of racial, ethnic and gender differences, as well as persons with disabilities.

....Multiculturalism assists us to value <u>all</u> people, not just those most like us...

- Population Aging
- Households Changing
- Growth Rate Slower
- Increase in Non-anglo Groups

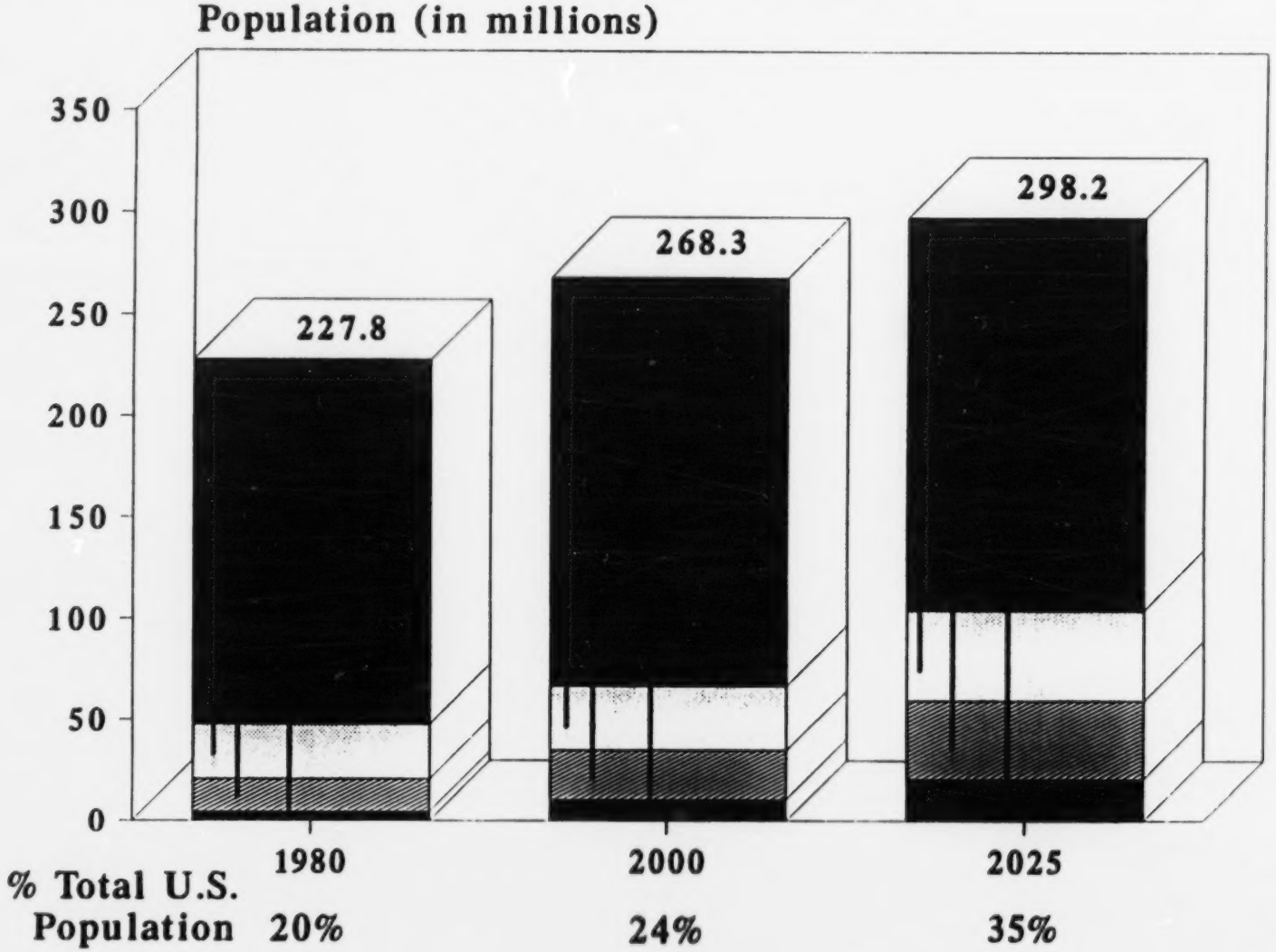
Table 1. Historical and Projected Population Growth in the U.S. by Race and Spanish Origin, 1950-2050.

	Population (in millions)				
Year	Total population	White	Black	Other races	Spanish origin*
1950	150.7	134.9	15.0	0.8	---
1960	180.7	160.0	19.0	1.7	---
1970	205.1	179.7	22.8	2.6	---
1980	227.8	195.6	26.9	5.3	14.6
1990	250.4	210.6	31.1	8.7	19.9
2000	268.3	221.5	35.1	11.7	25.2
2010	282.6	229.0	38.8	14.8	30.8
2020	294.4	234.4	42.1	17.9	36.5
2025	298.2	235.4	43.5	19.3	39.2
2030	300.6	235.2	44.6	20.8	41.9
2040	301.8	232.0	46.2	23.6	46.7
2050	299.8	226.6	47.1	26.1	50.8

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

* Persons of Spanish origin may be of any race.

Figure 4. Increase in Minority Populations



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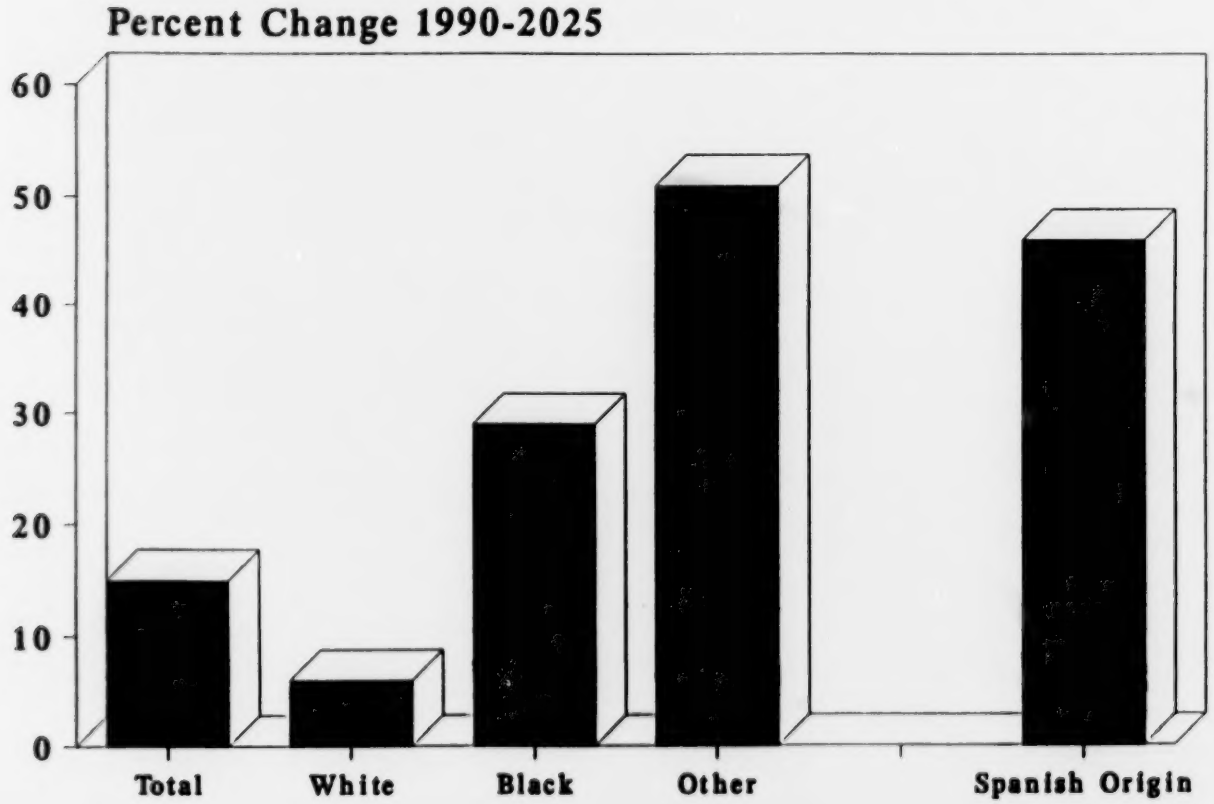
89% of today's anglers and 93% of today's hunters are white. Most are male.

Figure 5. Percent Change in the Number of Participants in Fishing in the U.S. by Race/Ethnicity, 1990-2025.



Source: Murdock et al., In Press a.

we can, and in fact <u>ought</u> to be part of the solution. If we do nothing we will continue to watch our traditional support base erode, and ultimately find that we've become an anachronism. If we view multiculturalism as an opportunity, we can participate in the process and shape the changes.

Multiculturalism offers a unique and unparalleled opportunity to promote hunting, fishing and trapping; and in so doing help connecta whole bunch of hitherto uninitiated folks with the natural world.

- Invite
- Include
- Break barriers
- Deny disability
- Advance accessibilty
- Avoid pitfalls
- Listen
- Learn from your mistakes

Responsibility and Respect:

A Code of Conduct For Hunters

"paradigm paralysis", the tendency we all have to limit our thinking to the perspective closest to our own.

It does little good to teach an urban kid how to fish if he or she cannot access the equipment, resource, expertise or social support needed to keep fishing. It does little good to get kids involved with hunter safety education programs when they have no one to take them hunting, and little social support for the activity .

"Resource managers have justified low use levels by minorities as being the result of a lack of interest on the part of minorities for the types of opportunities provided by the agencies. ....An equally valid argument can be made that the agencies do not provide the types of experiences preferred by ethnic minorities...."

(Blahna 1992)

we have the opportunity to promote fishing, hunting, trapping and other woodcraft activities as a means of finding a common ground among cultures.

Seventh Generation

"In our way of life, in our government, with every decision we make, we always keep in mind the Seventh Generation to come. It's our job to see that the people coming ahead, the generations still unborn, have a world no worse than ours- and hopefully better. When we walk upon Mother Earth we always plant our feet carefully because we know the faces of our future generations are looking up at us from beneath the ground..."

Oren Lyons, Onondaga
Faithkeeper